

THE HAMDANI INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES, SURAT

Islamic Studies Series No. 1.

THE BEGINNINGS OF
THE ISMĀ'ĪLĪ DA'WA
IN NORTHERN INDIA

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SIROVIĆ BOOKSHOP

P.O.B. 615

CAIRO — Egypt

1956

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Beginnings

About the end of the 3rd/9th Century, even before the Fāṭimid Caliphate was established on the North African soil, the Fāṭimid mission was at work in many countries, and India was no exception. On this point we have the evidence of the learned Qāḍī an-Nu'mān (d. 363/974) chief Qāḍī of the Fāṭimid Caliph Mu'izz (d. 365/976), who states that in 270/883 the Yamanite Dā'i Abul-Qāsim b. Ḥawshab Maṣṣūr al-Yaman sent his nephew al-Haytham as *dā'i* (missionary) to Sind and that the *Da'wa* (mission) spread to Hind.¹ We also have Rashīd ad-dīn's account of Fāṭimid missionaries in India during the period prior to the Fāṭimid conquest of North Africa, i.e. during the period of *satr*. A marginal note² in Juwaynī corroborates the same account.³

Having made a beginning in Sind, the *Da'wa* continued to grow and gradually permeated other areas, such as Multān, Gujrāt and the Punjāb and by the time of the Fāṭimid Caliph Mu'izz, it had quite a large following. This is recorded by the same Qāḍī an-Nu'mān⁴ and corroborated by his contemporary Ibn Ḥawqal,⁵ who informs us that the authority of the Fāṭimid Caliph was recognised in Baluchistān. Elliot and Dawson say: "One of the Balūch clans, indeed still preserves the memory of its heresy, or that of its progenitor, in retaining its present title of *Qarmaṣī*."⁶

- (1) *Iṣṭiṭāḥ*, ff. 18-19. This account is copied verbatim in Dā'i Idrīs's *Uyūn*, VI, f. 38.
- (2) Excerpts from Rashīd ad-dīn in R. Levy: *Isma'ili Doctrines in the Jāmi' at-Tawārīkh* etc., *J.R.A.S.* (1930), pp. 516, 518, 522.
- (3) *Ta'rīkh Jahān Gushāi*, *G.M.S.* (1937), vol. III, pp. 248-249 (being marginal note to p. 154, l. 8).
- (4) *Iṣṭiṭāḥ*, f. 18.
- (5) *Masālik*, ed. Kramers, vol. II, p. 410, ll. 7-12 (also see foot-notes). Cf. De Goeje: *Mémoires sur les Carmathes*, note on p. 196.
- (6) *History of India*, I App. p. 492.

The well-known historian al-Birūnī (first half of the 5th/11th century) states⁷ that one Jalam b. Shaybān, the leader of the Qarmaṭians⁸, attacked Multān, then a small independent principality,⁹ destroyed its famous idol *Aditya* (Sun God),¹⁰ venerated by both the Hindu inhabitants and its Arab Prince, and razed a mosque erected in the Umayyad times and built a new one on the same site. This story is repeated in detail by the Yamanite Ismā'īlī historian Dā'ī Idrīs (d. 872 H.), who writes¹¹ that in the time of Imām Mu'izz, a dā'ī was sent to Sind who converted many Magians (Majūs) but allowed them to continue with some of their non-Islāmic beliefs and customs.¹² He was replaced by another dā'ī, Jalam (Ḥilm) b. Shaybān.¹³ The

- (7) *India* (ed. Sachau) text p. 56; trans. pp. 116-117. Also see Defremery: *Histoire des Ismaïliés de la Perse*, J.A. VIII (1856), p. 381; Reinaud: *Fragments Arabes et Persans relatifs à l'Inde*, II, J.A. 1844, pp. 283-84, note 2.
- (8) The word "Qarmaṭian" is here applied to the Ismā'īlīs of the official Fāṭimid Da'wa and not to the dissident Da'wa of Syria or Baḥrayn, as is evident from the corroborating story of Dā'ī Idrīs given below, as well as Muqaddasī's statement mentioned later in this article.
- (9) Belonging to the Arab dynasty of Banū Sāma. Read below.
- (10) This famous idol is mentioned by many writers like Abū Zayd Ḥasan Sirānī (264 H.), Ibn Rusta (290 H.), Mas'ūdī (303 H.), Ibn Muḥallil (331 H.), Isṭakhṛī (340 H.), Ibn Ḥawqal (367 H.), Muqaddasī (375 H.), Bihūnī (432 H.) and Qazwīnī, who gives the detailed story of its destruction.
- (11) *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār* VI, ff. 100-117. Dā'ī Idrīs writes on the authority of a book by Qāḍī'n-Nu'mān (d. 363 H.) of which the name is not mentioned. The account does not occur in the *Iṣṭiṭāḥ* and I have not been able to see the relevant volume of *Sharḥ al-Akhbār*. Probably the reference is to the Qāḍī's *Majālis*.
- (12) In a recent article: *Heterodox Ismā'īlism at the time of al-Mu'izz* (B.S.O.A.S. XVII/1), S.M. Stern has edited extracts from Qāḍī'n Nu'mān's *al-Majālis wa'l-Muqayyirāt* and has deduced the following conclusions therefrom: about 347 H. a Fāṭimid dā'ī whose name is not known had converted in Multān many from the *majūs* and had written to Caliph Mu'izz about it. The Caliph did not like the *majūs* retaining their old views and thought the dā'ī heretical and disloyal for holding the view that the Fāṭimids were of Qaddāhid origin or that they were 'Alids, but followed an interregnum of Qaddāhids who led the Ismā'īlīs during the period of *saṭr*. The Caliph in his reply diplomatically showed approval of the dā'ī, but secretly plotted for his removal, and Ḥilm b. Shaybān was instructed to carry out the plot. But probably in 348 H. a riding accident in which the dā'ī was killed made further action unnecessary.
- (13) Jalam b. Shaybān's conflict with his predecessor is given in detail in *ʿUyūn* VI, f. 100 seq. Idrīs calls him Ḥilm.

Caliph sent a letter of instruction to him in Ramaḍān 354 H.¹⁴ This dā'ī put to death the ruler of Sind, destroyed a temple, and in its place built a mosque.¹⁵

The Arab kingdoms of Multan and Mansurah in Sind

Since the Arab conquest of Sind by their young and intrepid leader Muḥammad b. Qāsim during the time of the Umayyad Caliph Walid the Arab Muslim power was firmly established in this Indian province. In 258/871 the 'Abbāsid Caliph Muṭa'mid practically handed over the province to the famous Ṣaffārid leader Ya'qūb b. Layth, who was considerably responsible for the spread of Shi'ism in Sind. On the latter's death in 265/878 the Muslim territories in Sind were divided between two independant chiefs, those of Multān and Manṣūrah (Bahmanābād).¹⁶

a) MULTAN

In Multān, one Asad Qarashī of the Arab tribe of Banū Sāma established an independent principality. He ruled from 279 to 290 H. Mas'ūdī mentions his son Abu'l-Lubāb Manba's rule in 303 H. Iṣṭakhri and Ibn Hawqal also mention Banū Sāma as rulers of Multān, but do not give the names of individual rulers. We also learn from them that the Ismā'ili Da'wa had become very active in Multān. Dā'ī Idrīs gives the date 354 H. as about the time when the dā'ī Jalam (Ḥilm) b. Shaybān defeated the last Arab Prince of Banū Sāma, then ruling Multān.

When Muqaddasī came to Multān in 375 H., he found an Ismā'ili ruler governing the town. His name is not given, but the above discussion proves that he was Jalam b. Shaybān. During Muqaddasī's visit the idol *Aditya* was still there. Dā'ī Jalam, therefore, must have destroyed it about 376 H., presumably the last year of his life and rule. Muqaddasī writes: "The people of Multān are Shi'a... In Multān, the *Khuṭba* is read in the name of the Fāṭimid Caliph of Egypt and the place is

(14) Full text of the letter is reproduced in *op. cit.* ff. 114-117. Also see S.M. Stern: *Ismā'ili Propaganda and the Fāṭimid Rule in Sind*, art. I.C. Oct. 1949, pp. 298-307 and for a full translation, S.M. Stern: *Heterodox Ismā'ilism at the time of al-Mu'izz*, B.S.O.A.S., XVII/1.

(15) *Uyūn* VI, f. 117.

(16) *Advanced History of India* by Majumdar, Raychaudhari and Datta (London 1953), p. 275.

Ismā'ili rule in Multān 354 H to 401 H.

1) Jalam b. Shaybān

2) Shaykh Hamid

3) Abul Futuh Daud b. Naṣr

Persecution of Khawarizmī Isma'ilis in Multān
by Mahmūd Ghaznavī in 401 H?

4

administered by his orders. Gifts are regularly sent from here to Egypt."¹⁷

Farishta¹⁸ says that the next ruler of Multān was Shaykh Hamid, another Ismā'ili dā'i, and probably the son¹⁹ of Jalam b. Shaybān, who ruled up to 387 H.²⁰ The Ghaznawid Amīr Sabuktagin invaded Multān in 381 H., but later made a truce with Shaykh Hamid, as Ismā'ili Multān served as a buffer state between the rising Turkish power of Ghazna and the old Hindu rulers — the Imperial Pratiharas of Kanauj.

Sabuktagin's successor, the famous Maḥmūd of Ghazna, was temperamentally averse to compromise and a sworn enemy of Ismā'ilism. He broke the truce by invading Multān in 396 H. At this time, the Ismā'ili dā'i Abu'l-Futūḥ Dā'ūd b. Naṣr, the grandson of Shaykh Hamid, was ruling Multān. Tiring of the seven days siege of the town laid by Maḥmūd, Abu'l-Futūḥ agreed to pay tribute to the Sulṭān and Maḥmūd returned to Ghazna. Returning in 401 H., the Ghaznawid finally annexed Multān, took Abu'l-Futūḥ prisoner and massacred many Ismā'ilis. Abu'l-Futūḥ died in a prison in Ghazna.²¹

So came to an end the Ismā'ili rule in Multān. It had lasted from 354 H.²² to 401 H. — about half a century. The Dā'is of Multān constituted a dynasty of three rulers and were of Arab race.²³ They

(17) *Aḥsan al-Taqāsim* (Leiden ed.), p. 481.

(18) *Ta'rikh Farishta* (Nawal Kishor ed.), I, pp. 17-18.

(19) In the learned opinion of Mawlānā Sulaymān Nadvi: *'Arab-o-Hind ke Ta'alluqāt* (Allahabad, 1930) p. 326.

(20) The year of the Ghaznawid Sabuktagin's death. Farishta (*ibid*) considers Shaykh Hamid contemporary to Sabuktagin.

(21) Gardizi (d. 441 H.): *Zayn* (1928 - Berlin ed.), pp. 67-69. Farishta gives another version. While Gardizi is silent about the race of Ismā'ili ruler, Farishta considers him to be of Pathan origin. They differ also on the route of Maḥmūd's invasion. Again Farishta makes Abul-Futūḥ run away with his treasures to Ceylon.

As Mawlānā Sulaymān Nadvi points out (*op. cit.*, pp. 321-322) Gardizi's account is to be preferred, because he was contemporary to the events described, and lived and wrote in the Ghaznawid capital itself. Farishta not only wrote much later, but had a tendency to melodramatic inaccuracy.

(22) Although the conversion of Multān's *majūs* to Ismā'ilism took place in 347 H., Ismā'ilis did not become rulers of the city until 354 H., when dā'i Jalam b. Shaybān overthrew the Banū Sāma prince.

(23) S. Nadvi (*op. cit.* pp. 327-329) considers the Ismā'ili rulers as pure Arabs on the evidence of early Arab geographers and the very nature of their names, and rejects the fantastic theory of Farishta that they belonged to the Pathan Lodhi family.

were under the direct control of the Fāṭimids as is evidenced by the correspondence between Caliph Mu'izz and Jalam b. Shaybān reproduced by Idris in *'Uyūn al-Akḥbār* and in Muqaddasī's statement given above. Sunnī historians inaccurately refer to the community as "Qarmatians" of Multān, since they belonged to the official Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī Da'wa.

Muqaddasī who came to Multān during its Ismā'īlī regime has given the following picture of its social life : "Multān is smaller than Maṣṣūrah in size, but has a larger population. Fruits are not found in plenty; yet they are sold cheaper ... Like Sirāf, Multān has wooden homes. There is no bad conduct and drunkenness here, and people convicted of these crimes are punished by death or by some heavy sentence. Business is fair and honest. Travellers are looked after well. Most of the inhabitants are Arabs. They live by a river. The place abounds in vegetation and wealth. Trade flourishes here. Good manners and good living are noticed everywhere. The Government is just. Women of the town are modestly dressed with no make-up and hardly found talking to anyone in the streets. The water is healthy and the standard of living high. There is happiness, well-being and culture here. Persian is understood. Profits of business are high. People are healthy, but the town is not clean. Houses are small. The climate is warm and arid. The people are of darkish complexion... In Multān, the coin is minted on the style of the Fāṭimid Egyptian coin, but Qanhari coins are commonly used."²⁴

Maḥmūd's Wazīr, Hasnak, was put to death by Mas'ūd upon the charge of being an Ismā'īlī. The 'Abbāsīd Caliph had previously asked Maḥmūd to punish Hasnak for having received a robe of honour (*khil'a*) from the Fāṭimid Caliph, but Maḥmūd replied that he had no grounds for suspicion. When Maḥmūd died and Hasnak's enemy came to throne, the 'Abbāsīd Caliph's animosity was soon appeased.²⁵

The persecution of the Ismā'īlīs by Maḥmūd is attested to by the theologian al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), who says that the Ismā'īlīs of Multān were massacred in thousands by Maḥmūd.²⁶

Ismā'īlism survived in Multān despite Maḥmūd's vigorous assaults,

(24) Muqaddasī: *op. cit.*, pp. 481-482.

(25) Bayhaqī (cl. 370/1077): *Ta'rikh as-Subaktagin* (Tehran ed. 1327 H.), pp. 183-187; translated by Elliot and Dawson, *History of India*, vol II, pp. 93-100.

(26) *Farq* (Cairo ed.), pp. 277; cf. B. Lewis: *Ismā'īlī Note*, art. *B.S.O.A.S.*, XII, 1948, p. 600.

for in 571/1175, according to al-Juzjānī (d. 650 H.), Sulṭān Mu'izz ad-dīn Ghorī once again "delivered Multān from the hands of the Qarmāṭians".²⁷ The same author informs us that later, in 634/1236, during the reign of Raḍiyya Sulṭāna, the Ismā'īlis from all parts of the Indian sub-continent, particularly Gujarāt, Sind, Dihli (Dehli) and the banks of the Jamna and Ganges, assembled in large numbers and, with arms, under the leadership of one Nūr Turk, attacked the Jāmi' Maṣjid of the Capital. They were, however, defeated by the "Mus-salmans".²⁸

b) MANSURAH

Having collected above the references that are available about the Ismā'īli connections with Multān, we return to an earlier period to review the Ismā'īli influence in Maṣṣūrah.

Maṣṣūrah was built by 'Amr, the son of Muḥammad b. Qāsim, during Umayyad times between the years 110 and 120 H. as a safe refuge for the Arab community in Sind. According to Balādhurī,²⁹ 'Amr b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim wrested Bahmanābād (also known as Brahmanābād) from its governor, al-Ḥakam, and at a distance of two farasangs from it founded the Arab town of Maṣṣūrah. Later Maṣṣūrah also came to be known as Bahmanābād,³⁰ This is corroborated by Iṣṭakhrī³¹ and Ibn Ḥawqal³². It was situated on the banks of the Indus River, according to the excavations made by the Department of Antiquities during the years 1920-22, on the present site of Dhalor, 8 miles South-east of Shahdādpūr, eastwards along the canal of Jamdas. The author of *Mujmal al-Tawārīkh*³³ places Bahmanābād in the District of Budhia in Sind and states that the Persian King Bahman Ardeshir built it when he conquered this territory. Due to its good geographical position, Maṣṣūrah attained the

(27) *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, (Calcutta ed. 1864), pp. 116 and 189; trans. Elliot & Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

(28) *Ibid* (trans.), pp. 335, 336; cf. Defremery, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-384.

(29) *Futūḥ al-Bulḍān*, p. 444.

(30) *Op. cit.*, p. 439.

(31) p. 172.

(32) p. 226.

(33) ed. Tehran, pp. 117-118.

status of a capital for the Arab community of Sind.³⁴

Here one 'Amr b. 'Abd al-'Aziz founded the Arab dynasty of Habbārī Qurayshids in 240 H. during the reign of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mutawakkil. When the 'Abbāsīd Caliph Mu'tamid gave over Sind to the Ṣaffārid Ya'qūb b. Layth, the Habbārī dynasty became independent. It was a Sunnī dynasty and as such had maintained an 'Abbāsīd *Khuṭba* and owed a nominal allegiance to the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs. Under this dynasty large numbers of 'Alids settled in the country and attained for themselves considerable importance.³⁵ By the time of Ibn Ḥawqal and Muqaddasī, Manṣūrah had grown to be a large state comprising most of the Sind territory and included in it a number of important towns such as Daybul. Muqaddasī calls Manṣūrah the Capital of Sind.³⁶

In 375 H. when Muqaddasī came to Manṣūrah, the town was under Sunnī rule. Ibn Khaldūn says that the town was taken by Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 416 H. from the Habbārīds.³⁷ But Ibn al-Aṣḥir points out that when Maḥmūd of Ghazna was returning from his conquest of Somnāth, he came to Manṣūrah and took it from a prince who had renounced Islam.³⁸ The name of the Habbārīd prince, as given by the contemporary poet Farrukhī in one of his poems³⁹ is *Khafif*, who is not to be confused with a later Sūmra ruler of that name. We can therefore deduce that the last rulers of the Sunnī Habbārī dynasty had given up orthodox Islam, and espoused Ismā'īlism⁴⁰ sometime between 375 H. and 416 H. We have already noted above that a large 'Alid community was settled in Manṣūrah; that Ismā'īlī Da'wa was widespread throughout Sind. It is likely that Manṣūrah became the centre of Ismā'īlī activity. And about the time when they were ousted by Maḥmūd of Ghazna from Multān in 401 H. they may have concentrated in Manṣūrah due to its geographical position well suited for defence. They may have brought all their influence to bear on the

(34) The above facts are ably established on the critical analysis of Arab geographies by N.A. Baloch : *Chach-Nāma* (Sindhi trans. 1954), note on pp. 397-400. For the coins and clay medallions of the Arab governors of Manṣūrah see Thomas Princep's *Essays* and Cousen's *Antiquities of Sind*.

(35) Mas'ūdī: *Murūj*, vol. I, p. 377.

(36) Muqaddasī, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

(37) *Ta'rīkh* (Egyptian ed.), vol. II, p. 327.

(38) *Kamil* (Leiden ed. Tornberg), vol. IX, p. 243.

(39) Nāzīm: *Maḥmūd of Ghazna*, p. 120.

→ (40) Accepting Ismā'īlism would, in the opinion of Ibn al-Aṣḥir, be "renouncing Islam".

last Habbārid rulers and converted them to Ismā'ilism. Habbārids were after all as much in danger of Maḥmūd's invasion as the Ismā'ilīs.

Thus like Multān, Maṣṣūrah became an Ismā'īlī kingdom soon to be wiped out by the sworn enemy of Ismā'ilism, Maḥmūd of Ghazna. According to the above argument, the Ismā'īlī rule in Maṣṣūrah lasted from 401 H. to 416 H. — that is, for 15 years. Ismā'ilism, however, did not die. It remained a force and grew stronger, for it was accepted and patronised by yet another dynasty — that of the Sūmras.

The Sūmras

Sind was entirely conquered by Maḥmūd (d. 421 H.) and included in his Ghaznawid Empire. It remained so during the time of his son Mas'ūd and his son 'Abd ar-Rashīd (d. 444 H.). But now the Ghaznawids had become weak. Delhi and its environs were taken from them by the Ghorīs, and Sind became independent of them under the Sūmras.

In 425/1033, the famous Druze leader al-Muqtana wrote a letter to one Shaykh Sūmar Rājībal asking him to espouse the Druze cause.⁽⁴¹⁾ Mīr Ma'ṣūm⁽⁴²⁾ tells us that in the time of 'Abd ar-Rashīd b. Sulṭān Mas'ūd, about the year 443/1051, the men of the Sūmra tribe revolted from the rule of the Ghaznī, and placed on the throne of Sind a man named Sūmra. It seems that this Sūmra is the same person as our Shaykh Sūmar Rājībal, for it is obvious from Muqtana's letter that the Shaykh had a large following, which fact may have induced him to revolt and set up a separate kingdom.

The Sūmras were a local Sindhi Hindu tribe who had been converted to Islām right from the time of the first Arab conquest⁽⁴³⁾ and had considerably intermarried with the Arab settlers; with the result that their names are mixed Arab-Hindu. Even after conversion they had retained many of their old Hindu customs, like having their meals exclusively among themselves and not with any outsider.⁽⁴⁴⁾ They had marriage-relations with big local Arab landowners and had thus acquired great influence and power.⁽⁴⁵⁾ They lived on the banks of the

(41) Muqtana: *Risālat al-Hind* (British Museum, Arabic Ms. Add. 11561), f. 36; cf. B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

(42) *Ta'rikh-i-Sind* (Bombay ed. 1938), p. 60.

(43) Ibn Baṭūṭa: *Travels* (Egyptian ed.), vol. II, pp. 4-6.

(44) *Ibid.*

(45) *Ta'rikh-Sind* by Mīr Ma'ṣūm (extract Elliot's *Hist.*, vol. I, p. 215).

Indus, in the "big and beautiful" city of Janānī (not to be traced now) and in Schwān.⁴⁶

The modern savant, Mawlānā Sulaymān Nadvī argues that the religion of the Sūmras was Ismā'ilism, on the basis of the Druze epistle cited above. The Sūmras could not have belonged to the Druze dissident sect of the Ismā'ilis, because in that case the Druze writer would not have appealed to *Shaykh* Sūmar Rājibāl to accept Druzism. It appears that the Sūmras belonged, like their brethren in Multān and Manṣūrah, to the official Ismā'ilī Da'wa organised at that time on behalf of the Fāṭimid Caliphs of Egypt, Imāms Zāhir and Mustanṣir. The early Ismā'ilī Qarmaṭian dissident movement had never gained a hold in Sind, although as noted above, the Sunni historians, when referring to Ismā'ilis of the official Da'wa, often erroneously call them Qarmaṭians. The Nizārī orientation of Ismā'ilism is a later development and about its influence in Northern India we shall add a few lines later. The Druze epistle appeals to *Shaykh* Rājibāl to bring the younger Dā'ūd, a descendant of the last Ismā'ilī ruler of Multān, Abu'l-Futūḥ, and his folk back among the "believers in Tawḥīd", i.e., Ismā'ilis. A recent writer Moulvī 'Ubayd Allāh Shā'iq Sūmra, in a Sindhi book written in 1929 entitled *Dawlat-i-'Alawiyya* (or *Sūmrān ji Hukūmat*), has compiled a list of Sūmra rulers from geneological tables with fanciful Arabic titles given to these rulers and fantastic stories related about them. They may not be of any historical worth, but one thing seems clear, that the Sūmra family tradition regarded themselves as «'Alids», and as such more likely to accept Ismā'ilism.⁴⁷

*Tuhfat al-Kirām*⁴⁸ gives a list of rulers of the Sūmra dynasty along with the number of years they ruled. It is reproduced below :

(46) Ibn Baṭūṭa: *ibid*; cf. S. Nadvī: *op. cit.*, pp. 359-361. Daudpota (notes to *Ta'rikhi Ma'ṣūmī*, p. 289) on the authority of *Ta'rikhi Mubārakshāhi* (p. 43) calculates Janānī to be three miles from Schwān along the Indus towards the sea, near to Thatta.

(47) From unpublished notes of Dr. Daudpota. See also his note in his edition of *Mir Ma'ṣūm*, p. 289.

(48) Extract in Elliot and Dawson, *Hist. of India*, p. 343; cf. S. Nadvī, *op. cit.*; Daudpota (*op. cit.* pp. 289-290) gives comparative lists of Sūmra rulers as given in three sources: *Ta'rikhi Ma'ṣūmī*, *Tuhfat al-Kirām* and *Dawlat-i-'Alawiyya*. The one of *Tuhfat*, however, seems to be the more complete and as such has been made the basis of our discussion. Even this list has not been followed scrupulously in the text, necessitated by a maze of conflicting and complicating accounts.

1. Sūmra	... Ruled for a long time (?)
2. Bhūngar b. Sūmra I	... " " 15 years
3. Dūda I b. Bhūngar	... " " 24 "
4. Sanghār	... " " 15 "
5. Hafif (<i>Khafif</i>)	... " " 33 "
6. 'Umar (or Unar)	... " " 40 "
7. Dūda II	... " " 14 "
8. Pātho	... " " 33 "
9. Ghanrā I	... " " 16 "
10. Muḥammad Tor	... " " 15 "
11. Ghanrā II	... " " some "
12. Dūda III	... " " 14 "
13. Tā'i	... " " 15 "
14. Chīnsar	... " " 18 "
15. Bhūngar II	... " " 15 "
16. Khafif II	... " " 18 "
17. Dūda IV	... " " 25 "
18. 'Umar Sūmra	... " " 35 "
19. Bhūngar III	... " " 10 "
20. Hamīr (Amīr) Last King	... " " some "
<hr/>	
Total	355 years expressly mentioned
plus	6 " of nos. 11 and 20
<hr/>	
Total	361 years given in <i>Tuhfat</i>
plus	3 " of the first ruler
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Total	364 years calculated below

We have it from the author of *Tuhfat al-Kirām*, and other sources, that the Sūmra dynasty ended shortly after 752 H., when the Sultān of Delhi, Muḥammad Shāh Tughlaq invaded the Kingdom of the last Sūmra ruler Hamīr (or Amīr). Counting back 364 years it would mean that the Sūmra's rule began in 388 H. But we have already seen above that the Sūmras came to power in 443 H. by defeating 'Abd ar-Rashīd b. Mas'ūd b. Maḥmūd of Ghazna. Hence there is a discrepancy of 55 years, and this discrepancy is quite evident by the fact that very long reigns are attributed to *Khafif* (no. 5), Unar (no. 6), Pātho (no. 8)

and Unar Sūmra (no. 18). However this much appears certain that the Sūmras ruled Sind from 443 H. till after 752 H. — that is, for over 309 years.

The first in our list, Sūmra, as we have seen above, is the same person as *Shaykh* Sūmar Rājibal (or Rājā Pāl) of the Druze epistle. Mir Ma'şūm⁴⁹ tells us that with the help of his tribe he declared himself independant of Ghaznawids in 443 H. and King of Sind, at a place called Tharī (Thatta District). He married the daughter of a rich and powerful Arab landlord called Sa'd, and got a son by her, named Bhūngar, who succeeded him as the next ruler of Sind in 446 H. Muḥammad Yūsuf⁵⁰ adds that this Bhūngar ruled for fifteen years and died in 461 H.

Bhūngar's son and successor, Dūda I, conquered all territory from Naşrpūr (near Bahmanābād - Maṣūrah) to the eastern most boundries of Sind. On his death his son Sanghār became king, but, being an infant, his elder sister Tārī ruled on his behalf.⁵¹ Maulavī Abū Zafar, in his *Ta'rikh Sindh*,⁵² thinks that this Tārī is the same as Tā'i — no. 13 of our list above, and that her name has been erroneously inserted in the list. This is improbable, because Sanghār and Tā'i in the list are removed from each other by eight other rulers. If, on the other hand, Maulavī Abū Zafar's conjecture is correct, then 15 years of Tā'i's rule are taken off, thus reducing the discrepancy mentioned above considerably. Sanghār also was as bold a ruler as his father. He extended his kingdom in the west to include Makrān,⁵³ — Nānaknā'i, according to *Tuḥfat*, Halā Kandī, according to Mir Ma'şūm.

The author of *Tuḥfat* further mentions that Sanghār had no son, and therefore his wife Himū, who had occupied the fort of Adak, put her two brothers in possession of Tor and Tharī, and they ruled together.⁵⁴ If we take the next rulers on our list — *Khafīf* (no. 5) and Unar (no. 6) as the two brothers-in-law of Sanghār, their long reigns of 33 and 40 years could be considered simultaneous, thus reducing the above-mentioned discrepancy still further. They were contemporary to Shihāb ad-dīn Mu'izz ad-dīn Muḥammad Ghori, who annexed Multān

(49) *Ta'rikh-i-Sind* in Elliot, *Hist.*, I, 215.

(50) Author of *Muntakhab at-Tawārikh* quoted in *Tuḥfat al-Kirām* by 'Alī Sher Qānī in Elliot, *Hist.* I, 344.

(51) *Tuḥfat* (Bombay ed.), III, 35.

(52) Published at A'zamgarh, India 1947 (in Urdu), p. 291.

(53) *Tuḥfat*, *ibid.*

(54) *Ibid.*

and *Uchch* in 571 H. and had violated the territory of Sind in 578 H. In the section on Multān above we have cited a note from Juzjānī (d. 650 H.) to the effect that Sultān Muḥammad Ghori "delivered Multān from the hands of the Qarmatians" in 571 H. It is quite likely that one of the Sūmra brothers *Khafif* or *Unar* might have been in possession of Multān at that time.

The author of *Tuhfat al-Kirām* again gives us further information. Dūda II assumed the leadership of Sūmras, and from his fortress of Wāhka marched against the brothers of Himū and killed them.⁵⁵ The remnants of the ruling Sūmra tribe (now being defeated at Multān, *Uchch* and elsewhere in Sind by the advance of Muḥammad Ghori) gathered at Daybul, where they elected Dūda II as their next ruler.⁵⁶ Thus the Sūmra capital changes from Thari to Daybul. But Muḥammad Ghori occupied Daybul in 578 H. and swept through Sind. The Sūmra rulers Dūda II and his successor Pātho (Bhutto, probably, of the present times) seem to have existed as powerless princelings somewhere in Sind. Under the next ruler, Ghanrā I,⁵⁷ the Sūmra rule was confined to Thatta (about sixty miles from the modern Karachi).

We have it from *Farishta*⁵⁸ that during the reign of the slave king Shams ad-dīn Altamish (607-633 H.), Jalāl ad-dīn Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh, fleeing from Chingiz Khān, came to Lahore, where he was repulsed by the forces of Shams ad-dīn Aybak. So he rushed forth to Sind and occupied Thatta where the Sūmras were ruling. The name of the Sūmra King is given as Jalsī, but could be our Ghanrā I mentioned above. He could also be the same as Malik Sinān ad-Dīn Chanisar, Wāli-i-Sind wa Daybul,⁵⁹ who fled from Daybul in 621 H. Four years later (in 625 H.) he surrendered to Nizām al-Mulk al-Junaydī and accompanied him to the court of Iltutmish at Delhi.⁶⁰

Khwārazmshāh destroyed and plundered Thatta, and the Sūmras were again forced to move on. Under their next leader Muḥammad Tor they retreated into the desert and arrived at a place by the Indus River where they settled down. They named it "Muḥammad Tor"

(55) *Ibid.*

(56) *Ibid.*

(57) Khirā in *Ta'rikh-i-Ma'fūmī*, p. 61.

(58) *Farishta: Ta'rikh*, (Nawal Kishore ed.), II, 314.

(59) According to *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī*, ed. Raverty, p. 123.

(60) Daudpota: *A Dark Period in the History of Sind*, paper read at the Pakistan Historical Conference, Peshawar 1953.

after their leader, and it was alternately called "Mahātām Tor".⁶¹ It was situated in the Drik district which is now called *Chachgām*.⁶² Here Muhammad Tor managed to save the remnants of the Sūmra tribe and their Ismā'īlī tradition.

After the death of the slave king of Delhi Shams ad-din Aybak there was a civil war leading to the accession of Sulṭāna Raḍiyya in 634 H. to the throne of Delhi. The Ismā'īlīs took advantage of this unrest in Delhi to stage a revolt there — particularly because much of the persecution against them in the past emanated from there. Under the leadership of one Nūr Turk, Ismā'īlīs, primarily from Sind and Gujarāt but also from the banks of Ganges and Jamna, gathered in Delhi and attacked the Jāmi' Masjid to make it headquarters of their revolt, but were subsequently defeated by the ruling authorities.⁶³ We are confronted with the question: Was this Nūr Turk the same as Muḥammad Tor? We can make this conjecture because the Sūmras were the only influential Ismā'īlī community in Sind and the Sindi Ismā'īlīs had formed the main bulk of the people who revolted at Delhi under Nūr Turk. Moreover, it is the Sūmras alone who could have summoned their neighbours, the Gujarāti Ismā'īlīs, to their help, for the Sūmras had suffered considerably in the past at the hands of the Delhi rulers. The contemporary names, Muḥammad Tor (of the Sūmras) and Nūr Turk (of Delhi) could, therefore, be identified into one personality.

All the information we have about the successors of Muḥammad Tor in our Persian sources consists of nothing but a fairy tale — irrelevant stories of individual romances, devoid of any chronology or historical context. One thing is certain that the Sūmras managed somehow to keep up their small state at "Muḥammad Tor", although it was time and again ravaged by the Delhi Sulṭāns and the invading Moghuls. The next ruler, Ghanrā II, who may be identified as Chanīsār II, was dethroned by his step-brother Dūda III. He however sought help from 'Alā ad-din Khiljī (695-715 A.H.) and brought disaster to the Sūmra dynasty. Dūda resisted valiantly and "his deeds in this unequal war of attrition", states Daudpota,⁶⁴ "are still sung in ballads and inspire the Sindhis with legitimate pride." In 734 H.

(61) Farishta: *Tārīkh*, II, p. 314.

(62) S. Nadvi: *op. cit.*, p. 366.

(63) Juzjānī: *Tabaqāt-i-Nūjirī* (Calcutta ed. 1864), pp. 116 and 189; see above for the same note in the section on Multān.

(64) *Op. cit.*

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Ibn Baṭūṭa found in Sind a king by the name of Wūnar. He could be the same as 'Umar (Unar) Sūmra (no. 18) of our list.⁶⁵ The date 734 H. is just before the closing years of the Sūmra dynasty. Ibn Baṭūṭa says that Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Tughlaq had appointed a Hindu governor in Sind by the name of Malik Ratan. However, one of Sulṭān's officers Qaysar Rūmī, being jealous of Ratan, conspired with our Sūmra ruler Wūnar to get him killed. After the deed, Wūnar, in fright of the Sulṭān, ran away to his tribesmen and soon died of a drunken orgy.⁶⁶

The famous Muḥammad b. Tughlaq ruled in Delhi from 724 to 752 H. In the last year of his reign he proceeded against the Sūmra Kingdom, which was again ruled now from Thatta. In the service of Muḥammad b. Tughlaq there was a Moghul by the name of Taghī. He was sent to Gujarāt, but there he revolted and became independant. When the Sulṭān proceeded against him, he took refuge in the Sūmra capital of Thatta. Hence the Sulṭān had to invade the town. A long battle was fought near Thatta between Sūmras and Mughals on one side and the forces of Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Tughlaq on the other, but it remained indecisive, for the Sulṭān fell ill and died, and his army, after electing Fīrūzshāh as the next Sulṭān, decided to withdraw from Thatta on 21 Muḥarram, 752 H.

However, when Fīrūzshāh returned to Thatta in 762 H., ten years later, he found Jām Unar — first ruler of the Sunnī dynasty of Sama. It seems that the Sunnī Samas had defeated and driven out the Ismā'īlī Sūmras sometime between 752 H. and 762 H.; and from that time onwards we do not hear of the Sūmras.⁶⁷ At present in Sind there exists a famous and influential family of Soomro, who could probably be the descendants of the ancient Sūmras.

(65) S. Nadvi: *op. cit.*, p. 374.

(66) Ibn Baṭūṭa : *Travel*, I, 105-8.

(67) About the rise of Banū Sama, see the article by Riazul-Islam entitled *The Rise of Sammas in Sind in Islamic Culture* (1948). He maintains that Wūnar was a Sūmra as mentioned by Ibn Baṭūṭa, but Daudpota (*op. cit.*) thinks that he was the same as Jām Unar, the first Sama ruler. According to him, Wūnar, though a Sama, was the combined chief of both Sūmras and Samas acting as regent on behalf of Hamīr the minor son of the penultimate Sūmra ruler Armīl who was assassinated.

Riazul-Islam maintains that the policy of Delhi after 752 H. was to support the last Sūmras as a counterpoise against the rising Sammas who, when they came to power, necessitated another invasion from Delhi in 762 H. by Fīrūzshāh (*op. cit.*, pp. 365-368).

As noted above the Sūmras were Ismā'ilis. But the question remains about the exact shade and sub-division of Ismā'ilism which the Sūmras had accepted. We already noted above that they could neither have been of the Qarmaṭian nor Druze brands of Ismā'ilism. The early Sūmra rulers definitely belonged to the official Fāṭimid Ismā'ili Da'wa. But the Fāṭimid Da'wa itself, after the death of Imām Mustanṣir at Cairo in 487 H., had been divided into two sections. The one was the Musta'lian Da'wa which had the Yaman, and later the Gujarāt coast of India, as its headquarters; and the other was the Nizārī Ismā'ili Da'wa which had its headquarters at Alamūt in Persia under the leadership of the celebrated Ḥasan b. Ṣabbāḥ and espousing the cause of Imām Nizār b. Mustanṣir and his descendants. The question now arises as to which of the two Da'was did the later Sūmras, from say Sanghār (no. 4 of our list) onwards belong to — in other words, were they under the influence of the Da'wa of the Yaman or the Ismā'ilis of Persia?

The Musta'lian Da'wa of the Yaman controlled their local converts in Gujarāt from 460 H. upto 944 H., when it shifted its headquarters to Gujarāt itself. During this time the Yamanites exercised a thorough Arab influence. We find in their Da'wa in Gujarāt people with Arabic names, and literature written mainly in Arabic. The local Hindu tradition was abandoned and the process of Arabicising had gone very deep. But in the case of Sūmras, except for their hereditary Arab names (some of them) we find a considerable Hindu cultural influence. This goes to prove that the Musta'lian Yamanī Da'wa had hardly any influence over them. Their relations with the Musta'lians is therefore improbable, particularly in absence of any evidence to the contrary.

Now let us examine the Nizārī Ismā'ili tradition of Persia. In the time of Imām Nizār and his son Imām Hādī and the Dā'ī Ḥasan b. Ṣabbāḥ, a *dā'ī* was sent from Persia to Gujarāt. His name was Sat Gur Nūr and his tomb is still shown at Navsārī. Another *dā'ī* called Pir Shams Sabzwārī was also sent to India. He appears as a figure resembling the Indian *Jogis*. Many legends of a Ṣūfic type are woven around the character of Pir Shams, which shows a clear affinity between the tales of Persian mysticism and the Hindu mythology. It is asserted in modern Ismā'ili writings that he was sent to Multān where he got a considerable following. He is also supposed to have converted to Nizārīan Ismā'ilism much of the population of Badakhshān, Kashmīr and Northern India. If his activity was during the period of Sūmra rule we would have easily connected the Sūmras with Nizārī Ismā'ilism.

But *Pir Shams* was sent to India during the time of *Imām Qāsim Shāh* (710-771), almost at the close of *Sūmra* dynasty. Hence it is difficult to say that the *Sūmras* were *Nizārī Ismā'ilis*. It is likely that being near Persia they might have been under *Nizārī* influence, but there is no historical evidence to support such a contention.

What kind of *Ismā'ilis* were the *Sūmras* then? To my mind, after the *Nizārid-Musta'lian* split among the *Ismā'ilis* in 487 H. the *Sūmras* drifted away from both the rival *Da'was*; separating from these *Da'was*, made themselves quite independent. They just kept up the *Fātimid Ismā'ilī* tradition of their forefathers without paying any allegiance to any *Da'wa* outside. They had a sort of *Ismā'ilism* of their own, which kept them neutral from the *Sunni Islām* brought by the Turkish conquerors and their *Hindu* environment. However, whatever kind of *Ismā'ilī* tradition they kept up, helped in the later *Nizārid* mission in Northern India particularly under *Pir Šadrudīn*, who died near *Uchch* in 876/1471.

Thus ends the first chapter regarding the beginning of *Ismā'ilism* in India. Its logical sequel is a discussion on the *Musta'lian Da'wa* in Western India, particularly *Gujarāt*, and the *Nizārid* mission in Northern India.